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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY East Germany

REPORT

SUBJECT Discontent of Railroad Employees
over New "Four Brigade" Work Plan

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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE

"agreement" (Vereinbarung)
by Minister of Traffic Erwin Kramer concerning the method, effect, and reason
for the "Four Brigade" work plan introduced into East German railroad operations
(stations and tracks).

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Comments:

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1. This plan is already meeting considerable opposition from railroad employees.
2. The plan provides that inside workers will have to do outside repair work during the period of "Arbeitsplatzvorbereitung" (worksite preparatory work). This is to save semi-skilled labor otherwise assigned for such work as track inspection, tightening of bolts, maintenance of right-of-way, cleaning of station buildings, and maintenance of switches within the physical area of principal duty.
3. In general this is an attempt to overcome the shortage of lower-paid workers by making older, higher-paid workers do semi-skilled or unskilled work. The low-paid workers have been finding better-paying jobs elsewhere. All duty, no matter what kind, will be paid for according to the highest classification of the worker; thus, a railroad crossing guard may become qualified as a switching tower operator but any work he does as a crossing guard will be compensated for at the rate of a switching tower operator.
4. The shortage of railroad employees is so acute that the Council of Ministers reportedly has secretly adopted a resolution stating that all railroad workers who quit their jobs may not be employed in any government-owned or government-operated enterprise. Supposedly, they will then be forced to return to their railroad jobs. The training of less-skilled workers for higher positions is to guarantee that all members of a brigade are qualified to perform all duties of the brigade to which they belong.
5. The plan is to be in effect for all employees working in stations and on rights-of-way by 31 August 1957. The RBD Dresden is to effect the changeover to the new system by 31 December 1956.

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6. It is estimated that the over-all additional wage cost of this plan will amount to 32,000,000 DME annually, resulting from the payment of higher wages for semi-skilled or unskilled work.
7. The various political departments of the Ministry of Traffic are being given time to convince the railroad employees of the benefits of the new plan.



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